

July 30th 1865-

The Ship Daniel Webster was that day just out of the ice pack where she had been since the 1st of same month.

It being Sunday I did not intend to have work much account doing a strict Sabbath.

But as everything was out of place I thought I would get things snug for coming weather &c.

Therefore I set up the keel rigging and in doing so one of our men (John Armstrong by name) was at work with the spade. About 2 hours after all things to rights and I went aft and was walking the deck.

At four bells one of the men came to me and said that it was John's wheel and he could not be found. I told him to look around and they would soon find him. But they soon came to me again. This time I called all hands and gave the ship a thorough over-hauling but the fact was never seen afterwards.

Now the weather was calm and still. And in that pure air I could have heard a jack-knife had it fallen over board. And how this man could have disappeared is more than I can account for.

Right before 11 or 12 men got up we saw nor heard nor nothing to cause suspicion. But the mysterious and silent way he departed from our very midst leaves us in the wonder of an unsolved problem.

Once when it seemed a gentle sleep
Was resting o'er the placid deep
While through the air so pure and clear
The gentlest sounds must find the ear
Yet through so still a hummer being
Passed from our midst, unheard, unseen

Deep in the caverns of the sea
Are vaults of darkened mystery
Where perhaps the howling whale
May show the tumult of the gale

Could he as none has done before
Those secret chambers too explore
We might perhaps returning tell
The secret of some hidden cell
Whence that body cold and dead
May waste upon the coral bed

Whose friends may long and anxious wait
For him. But never learn his fate
Let a place in the church-yard save
Beside a father's or a mother's grave
While to memory each year shall bring
New doubts upon hopes drooping wing

What pen shall mark that hopeless fear
Which calls for help when none is near
And who shall state that drop of time
When past and future both combined
Shall on memories distracted waste
A glimpse from youth to age embraced

Each deed each thought of life before
Fresh in that instant to live o'er
As gathered in one mountain wave
To break and mingle o'er the grave
Whose waters then recede in tears
As gathered from our earthly years
To leave the whole one joy or pain
As the reward of heartless man